TARO OR KALO.

THE HAWAIIAN STAFF OF LIFE.

The Many Varieties of the Tuber and How It Is Raised.

(Written for the GAZETTE.)

The following notes in regard to taro or kalo and its uses have been compiled more particularly for the information of tourists and other new comers to these islands, and also for the benefit of readers abroad:

According to Fornander, the Hawaiians ascribe the introduction of taro to their renowned ancestor Wakea. Dr. Hillebrand, a botanical authority, is of the opinion that the taro is hardly to be reckoned as indigenous, being one of 24 species of plants introduced here by the Sawaiori or Polynesian race in the migration from southern or western lands in pre-historic times. In other words, it was brought here by the first Hawaiian settlers at the same time as the sweet potato, awa, cocoanut, banana, etc. The same authority states that "the species is of (East) Indian origin, but its cultivation has extended both eastward and westward to Egypt, several Mediterranean countries, Madeira, the Canaries and the West Indies. Nowhere else does the tuber grow to that perfection which it attains at the Hawaiian Islands."

The native name for the tuber is *kalo*, although foreigners still retain the ancient pronounciation of *taro*. Until within recent years, the botanical term most commonly used by writers when referring to the taro or kalo plant was *arum esculentum*. This was the name used by Foster, botanist with Captain Cook's second voyage of discovery, but in Hillebrand's Flora of the Hawaiian Islands it is styled *Colocasia antiquorum* (*var. esculenta*) H. W. Schott. Dr. Hillebrand, however, gives four other names for the kalo, viz:

Arum colocasia, Linnaeus.

Arum esculentum, Linnaeus & Forster.

Colocasia esculenta, Schott & Endlicher.

Caladium esculentum, Engler.

Dr. Hillebrand had doubtless good reasons for selecting the first name given above in preference to that of *arum esculentum*, still it is an amusing example of how authorities differ, and more especially of how botanists have continued piling up their Latin nomenclature on a single plant.

It is a pity, and to say the least, it is somewhat strange, that Dr. Hillebrand has not devoted more space in his work on the Hawaiian Flora to a description of the kalo, seeing that the tuber is the chief food of the Hawaiian race. He gives one page only to the Colocasia, and does not treat of the different varieties of the kalo growing on these islands, but simply says that the Hawaiians distinguish a considerable number of varieties according to the quality of the tuber and the color of the leaf stalk. A writer in Thrum's Almanac for 1887, in an interesting article on the kalo, quotes the name of a number of different varieties of the kalo growing on these islands. This writer fixes the number at 28, but it is possible that some less-known varieties may exist. Ellis in his Polynesian Researches mentions that the Tahitians have names for 33 different varieties. Surely then in Hawaii nei, where the cultivation of the kalo was brought to a greater pitch of excellence than it was in the South Seas there must be as many varieties of the plant as in Tahiti. The kalo has been described as a perennial herb, 1–1½ feet high, with a tuberous stock. The leaves about one foot in length, and usually of the same bread heart shape as the well-known white arum lily, or in botanical parlance, they are orate, cordate and peltate. Several spadices or spikes arise from one axil, the spathes being yellow. The tuber is oblong in shape, 9 to 12 inches in length, and 5 to 6 inches in diameter.

The liberty is taken of giving a list of the different varieties of kalo as published in Thrum's Almanac, a few additional kinds, however, being added thereto:

Ala.
Apii.
Apowale.
Apuwai (two varieties), leaves curled up like a cup.
Elepaio, spotted leaves.
Haokea.
Hapuupuu (two varieties).
Heualehu, or Ualehu.
Ipuolono.
Kai, Koi, Kaikoi (four varieties).
Kanio.
Ku-mu.
Kuoho.
Lauloa.
Lehua.
Lehuaakiukawao.
Lola.
Mahaha.
Makaopio.
Makohi.
Makoko.
Mamauea, or Aweoweo (two varieties), wild.
Mana (four varieties).
Manini.
Naua.
Nawao—unfit for food.
Noho.
Paakai—very white, hence "salt."
Palakea.
Piialii.
Piko.
Poni—has purple stalk.
Uwahiapele.
Wae.
Wehiwa.

In the article in Thrum's Almanac it is stated that "apuwai in its white variety is the general favorite of late years. A red variety has been met with in Nuuanu valley, said to have been introduced from Tahiti. The different varieties of kai are said to be remarkably fragrant when cooked, and is scarce; grown principally at Ewa. Mana is a great favorite with some people, especially its yellow and red varieties, and is said to be distinguishable in its having a double stalk to each root. Ipuolono is an excellent variety and, as its name indicates, belonged to the priesthood. Lauloa is used by the kahunas as having medical properties, both in root and leaf. Its name, meaning long leaf, has been transferred by them to mean long life. The Lehua and Piialii were said to be the favorite red taros of the chiefs, from which, in the manufacture of their poi, the centre portions only of each taro was used."

Besides the kalo proper, the natives during times of scarcity were wont formerly to eat the stem of the ape (alocasia macrorrhiza). The ape belongs to the same order as the kalo, viz, the araceal, and is often met with in gardens, where its large, handsome glossy green leaves help to make a striking addition to the landscape.

MODE OF CULTIVATION.

Kalo is chiefly cultivated on the flats near the sea shore, and more especially at the mouths of valleys, where water is available for irrigation. Certain varieties are also grown in the uplands, and in the woods kalo may be found wild, having evidently escaped from old cultivations. In olden times the *makaainana*, or common people, together with the *kauwa*, or slaves taken in battle, were the principal tillers of the soil. The chiefs in most instances were content to claim their share just about the time when the crop was getting ripe, and various authorities estimate that the poor laborer was lucky if he managed to secure one-third of the kalo crop for his own use, the remainder going to the chiefs great and small, who preyed upon him as his feudal superiors. Kamehameha I., however, was not above showing his people a good example, for Archibald Campbell, the Scottish sailor, writes in 1810: "I have often seen the king working hard in a taro patch. I know not whether this was done with a view of setting an example of industry to his subjects. Such exertion could scarcely be thought necessary among these islanders, who are certainly the most industrious people I ever saw."

The crop is generally raised in small patches, situated on the *kuleana* or *moo* of the cultivator, and may measure in extent from say 50 feet square to one or two acres. In the case of the lowland taro, the land requires to be irrigated, and for this purpose the soil or green sward is dug over (*alaa*). An embankment of about two to three feet high and a foot or two in width is then made, so as to enclose the patch on all sides. Should the soil be of a very porous nature, the ground is then beaten, particularly along the sides of the patch, with cocoanut stems or branches, in order to make the ground hold water. Previous to and for some years after the arrival of white men on these shores, the cultivation of the soil was done entirely by the aid of the *oo*. The *oo* was simply a short pointed stick made out of hard wood and sharpened to a point or fashioned into a kind of spade or paddle. The native way of handling this agricultural implement was for the workman to squat on his hams and heels (*Scottice* "hunkers") and grasp it by the handle (*kano* or *kuau*) with both hands. The *oos* were usually made out of the following kinds of hard wood, viz: Uulei, or ulei (*osteomeles anthyllidifolia*); kauila (*alphitonia ponderosa*); puhala (*pandanus odoratissimus*); uhiuhi (mamani), (*sophora chrysophylla*); walanee (*plectronia odorata*). A kind of "spud" or weeder, having a wooden handle and an iron socket chisel head is now sold in Honolulu under the name of *oo*. Professor Alexander in his Brief History, mentions that "it was the custom in making the *oos* to address prayers to Ku-pulupulu, or Ku-mokuhalii in order to insure good luck. They were also careful to plant only on certain days of the moon." (The days of Ku, Hua, Akua, Kane and Lono have been stated to the compiler of these notes as propitious days for planting.) "Then there were prayers to be repeated when planting and at different stages of the growth of the crop, addressed to Kane-puaa (the god of agriculture or mahiai) and prayers for rain addressed to Lono or Ku."

The ground being prepared, it is flooded with water let in from another kalo patch situated on a higher level or from an aqueduct, the water in many cases being brought from a considerable distance away and at a great outlay of labor. The celebrated water course at Iole in North Kohala, Hawaii, is a good example of what the ancient Hawaiians could do in this line aided only by wooden *oos* and stone *kois* or adzes. The unwritten laws regarding irrigation and the use of water from the aqueducts are believed to have been the only regulations observed in common by the ancient Hawaiians and hence the word "Ka-na-wai" or "water rights" has come to be used in the Hawaiian language for anything in the way of a law or legislative enactment.

The plants are propagated by planting, cuttings from the top of the tuber with the stems of the leaves adhering thereto. This part used in planting is called the "huli." The hulis are usually planted in rows in groups or "blocks of five" one huli being planted at each corner of the hill or group and the fifth one in the centre. Each of these groups is called a *puepue*. The number of plants in a puepue is not restricted to five hulis, a greater or less number may be planted together and sometimes the field is planted in rows after the fashion employed by the Chinese in their rice fields.

The crop requires to be weeded about three times, and in the operation of weeding which is termed *olao* or *olaolao*, the soil is gradually collected round each puepue or group of young taro so as to form small hillocks. The first leaf to make its appearance on the young plant is called *lauawa*, the second leaf *laupai*, the centre leaf in a kalo plant after the leaves are pretty well developed being termed *lau kapalala*. Should the kalo patch have been neglected, and the crop has a poor stunted appearance, then such stunted plants are styled by the name *Kokole* or *Puhu*. From the time the crop is half matured until fully ripe it is essential to keep the kalo-patch or field well covered with water. The crop ripens in from say seven to fifteen months, according to the depth of soil, situation, kind of kalo, etc.

"When the crop was ripe," says Prof. Alexander, talking of ancient days, "the first fruits were offered to the family gods on the proper day of the moon. Some of the food was cooked together with red fish. The family idol was brought, together with the Pu o Lono, or sacred calabash. Part of the food was offered to the god, and the rest was consumed by the company; after this the field or taro-patch was *noa* or free."

Besides cultivating from the hulis or tops of the tuberous root-stock of the kalo, the plant could be grown from the shoots or suckers which spring up around the plant by the time the tuber is about ripe. This kind of second crop kalo is called *Kalo Kamau* or *Pilimai*.

The upland taro is grown without water, but, in order to retain the moisture and protect the plant from the sun, it is usual to surround the young plants with fern leaves and dried grass. This serves both as a protection from the rays of the sun, and also as a manure when the fern leaves, etc., become sufficiently rotted. The kalo thus grown in the mountains takes longer to mature, and attains a much larger size than that grown in the water on the lowlands. The mountain taro is also of a drier and mealier nature when cooked than the aquatic varieties.

When the crop is ripe the roots are pulled up by the hand, the hulis are cut off and replanted for a fresh crop. The whole process of cultivating kalo is included in the term mahiai.

COOKING THE KALO.

Owing to its hot and biting taste and astringent qualities, the kalo root requires to be cooked before it is fit for food. The process is performed (by the natives) by means of steaming in the common Polynesian underground oven. The oven (*imu* or *umu*) is a hole dug in the ground about 4 feet wide with a depth of say 3 feet. A number of stones averaging about the size of a man's fist, are spread over the bottom of the pit, the larger sized ones being ranged round the sides, so as to prevent the earth falling in. A quantity of dried leaves and brushwood is then placed above these stones and on the top again of the firewood is piled another lot of stones. The firewood is lit and after the stones at top and bottom are thoroughly heated the stones at the top are raked off, as also the unburnt embers, ashes, etc. This is done with a stick called *uluumu*, and the act of poking out the red-hot stones out of the ashes is called *ulu*. The kalo is now wrapped up in banana leaves or leaves of the *honohono* (oplismenus compositus), and placed in the pit on the top of the hot stones. Above the taro is spread a covering of leaves, grass, etc. (*kamakamaka*) and finally on top of all is laid a thick covering of earth, old mats, etc. (*kauwewe*). Water is then poured on the top (*haiwai*), the consequence being that a great quantity of steam is generated, which in the space of from half an hour to one hour, according to the quantity of food in the pit, thoroughly cooks the contents of the oven, whether it be kalo, or pork, or breadfruit, or fish. The whole process of baking in the underground oven is termed *kahu*, *kalua*, or simply *umu*. The Chinese, who make a great deal of the poi sold in Honolulu, cook their taro in a large wooden box provided with an iron grating below, and use for fuel some cheap stuff, such as rice husks.

POUNDING THE KALO.

When the kalo is taken from the oven it is found to be changed to a light farinaceous substance resembling somewhat a dry mealy potato. It is stripped by hand of its outer skin and then scraped clean with a piece of broken calabash (*pohue*), or opihi or wi shell. The operation of cleaning the kalo is *hoopole*, or *maihi*. The refuse, or stuff scraped off is *pahe*. Having cleaned a sufficient quantity, it is placed on an oblong wooden tray or trough, slightly hollowed out in the middle. *Papa kui poi*, or poi pounding boards, are made of koa, ahakea or ulu (breadfruit). One man, or better perhaps say two men, stripped naked except the *malo*, seat themselves on the ground one at each end of the board, and grasping a lava stone, pestle shaped, not unlike a druggist's pestle, they proceed to thump and pound away at the kalo on the board in front of them. As the operation proceeds a little water from time to time is added to the mass, so as to help the softening and mixing process. It is very hard work, especially in this tropical climate, and by the time that the kalo is well mashed the workmen are usually in a state of violent perspiration. It is after having seen this mode of preparing poi that white people as a rule turn away in disgust and will not touch the stuff.

Having been sufficiently pounded (*kui*, or *kimo*) with the pestle, it is then kneeded like baker's dough, with the hands (*poe*). It is then poi—the finished article, and ready for cold consumption. Poi, as is well known, is the chief food of the Hawaiians, and it is also used to a certain degree in the South Sea Islands. The Maoris of New Zealand, who are so closely connected to the Hawaiians, do not appear to have ever cultivated the kalo root, their chief vegetable food having been the kumara, or sweet potato, and the edible fern root.

In addition to the stone implement, or *pohaku kui poi*, shaped like a druggist's pestle, there is another kind of pestle fashioned like a stirrup iron (*pohaku puka*), which was peculiar to Kauai. A variety of this Kauai kind is sometimes met with. It varies from the usual pattern in not having the centre part pierced through, but only slightly scooped out on one side, so as to allow it to be grasped by the fingers. These poi pounders, or pestles, were also used for pounding salt, medicinal herbs, roots, etc.

Besides the pounding process above described the cooked kalo was sometimes grated on a slab of lava (*papa wili ai*, or *papa pohaku*).

If not required for immediate consumption the kalo is mashed on the board, but without the addition of water, or at any rate of very little water. In this form it is termed *paiai*, and will keep for a considerable number of weeks, or even months, if very hard and well wrapped up in *lauki*, or *ti* leaves. In this shape it was supplied to the whalers touching at the islands, for consumption by their native crews, and paiai is, or rather was, taken to sea by native fishermen in their canoes when going off on a fishing expedition. Ellis, in his Tour Round Hawaii, mentions paiai as one of the articles sold at the so-called Fair held in olden times on the banks of the Wailuku river, near Hilo.

POI CALABASHES.

After the process of mashing is finished, the poi is transferred to calabashes made out of a gourd or of wood. The Hawaiian name for a poi calabash is *umeke poi*. The gourd used as a container is the front of the *ipu awaawa* (curcubita maxima), and a calabash of this kind is called a *umeke pohue*. In size they range from a few inches in diameter up to several feet. These gourds are also used as water bottles, hula drums, etc., and were often gracefully ornamented with colored designs.

The wooden calabashes are made chiefly from kou (cordia subcordata), koa (acacia koa), olomea (Perottetia Sandwicensis), milo (thespesia populnea). For holding a week's supply or for use in a large household, some of these wooden calabashes were very large, and would hold close on fifteen gallons. The average calabash, however, was much smaller. They are certainly handsome pieces of workmanship, and in shape and finish are hardly to be excelled by modern machine-turned articles of the same description.

Not only the size, but the shape of the wooden calabashes varies. One pattern is greater in height than width and is narrower at the top than nearer the bottom. It is styled *umeke kuoho*, whilst the broad and shallower design is classified as *umeke pakaka*. A calabash full of poi or other kind of food is *e-o*.

The calabashes have often a cover called "*poi*," and have likewise a neat network of strings made of olona (tonchardia latifolia) and cocoanut fibre. This netting was used in suspending the calabash to the roof of the house or to the *oiaole*, a board set on a post and made especially for the purpose of hanging containers on. The name given to the calabash netting is *koko* or *koko puupuu*, but the ancient designation is said to have been *maaloha*.

EATING POI.

When about to eat poi, the better classes of natives used finger-bowls, *pawai holoi lima*, both before and after eating. It is needless to add that spoons, knives and forks were conspicuous by their absence from the meals of the Hawaiians, the poi being eaten by thrusting the first or first and second fingers into the poi and after collecting a sufficient quantity of the adhesive paste on to the finger or fingers, with a rapid twirl the hand is withdrawn, and by a dextrous movement, which requires practice on the part of the performer, the hand with its burden is conveyed to the mouth where the poi is sucked off with a smacking sound of the lips, indicative of the great gusto with which it is consumed. According to the consistency of the paste, whether thick or thin, poi has humorously been classed into "one finger poi" and "two finger poi." As is the case with the Chinaman and Jap and their rice, the Hawaiian generally desires to have some accompaniment or relish to eat along with his poi. This may be raw fish, or a bit of pork, or *inamona*, a species of Hawaiian chutney made from roasted kukui nuts, pounded and mixed with salt. Seaweed or *limu* and shellfish of different kinds are also favorite side dishes.

Seeing that poi fills such an important part in the Hawaiian's daily bill-of-fare, it is only to be expected that he should be a connoisseur in regard to the taste and color, etc., of the national dish. If it is at all lumpy it is *puupuu*; if imperfectly pounded and the poi is full of small pieces of the fibrous part of the tuber, it is declared to be *oneone*. If too coarse, and not well worked up after pounding, it is *mahumahu*; and if made from diseased or inferior kalo, it is said to be *mokaekae*, and so on. White folks who sometimes, for a change, indulge in a little poi, prefer it when it is fresh, but the natives like it to be somewhat sour or fermented, and some even have a strong partiality for very sour poi, or *poi akia*. In the sour condition, it is said to "go high" with raw fish!

The time when the fermenting or souring process begins varies greatly with the amount of water worked into the kalo; the more water there is in the poi the quicker it becomes sour, but, on an average, poi will commence to ferment and swell up within twenty-four hours or so after being made. In a week's time or less it gets too sour even for the native stomach to digest. From a food point of view, poi seems to be a good fat-former, judging by the huge, unwieldy figures of the ancient chiefesses; but it does not seem to give much stamina or grit to the native constitution.

OTHER USES FOR KALO.

The kalo, when boiled or baked, is cut into slices and served as a vegetable. In this form it is appreciated by foreigners, being dry and mealy. Taro or kalo cakes made out of cooked kalo pounded and then fried is also a favorite dish on the tables of white folks.

A kind of pudding called "*kulolo*" is made from a mixture of cooked kalo and cocoanut. It is very pleasant in taste, although a little of it at a time will satisfy most people. *Kulolo* may also be made from *taro flour*, the receipt for making same as issued by the Hawaiian Fruit and Taro Company is as follows: "Take six cups of taro flour, four cups of cocoanut-milk, four tablespoonsful of sugar, grate fine the meat of the cocoanut, mix all together well, put in a deep dish well buttered, and bake one hour in moderate oven. Eaten warm or cold, this is a delicious dish."

Kalo root, uncooked, is used as a native medicine; *kalo piialii* or *kalo laulea* is generally used. The root is scraped fine and put in a bowl together with some sugarcane juice and leaves and stalks of *paihi* or *ihi* (pigweed or *portulaca oleracea*). The mixture is drank in certain cases of sickness.

An excellent substitute for spinach is obtained by gathering the young leaves of the kalo, and, after binding them up with old leaves, cooking them in the oven in the usual fashion. This is a favorite dish in the South Sea Islands in places like Tonga or Samoa. In the latter group it goes by the name of "palusami."

The *puakalo* or kalo blossoms are also cooked and have been likened to asparagus. The dish made of the young soft tops and blossoms is called *ohalau*.

The stalks (*kaha*) of some kind of kalo are edible, more especially the kind called ka-i, grown at Ewa and Waialua, the purplish stalks of which have a sweetish taste. It may be called Hawaiian rhubarb.

Poi being of an adhesive nature, it is therefore sometimes used as a batter for wall papering or for pasting pictures, etc., into scrap books.

As a change, the kalo was grated fine and then cooked in ki leaves. In this form it is styled *piele* or *pipiele*.

In addition to being used as a food for mankind, poi was also given by the natives to the species of dogs which were fattened up in olden times and served a delicacy at banquets. Different breeds of these poi dogs were recognized, such as the *ii*, a brown animal, and the *olomea*, with hair or bristles like a pig, etc.

At the present day, the area of land laid down in kalo is much smaller than at the time of the discovery of the islands by Capt. Cook. This is accounted for chiefly by the great decrease in the Hawaiian race. Much land formerly devoted to kalo is now rented out to Chinese for rice plantations. An example of this may be seen at Waikiki where a considerable area of land, which at the date of Vancouver's visit to the islands in 1792–3 was set apart for kalo, is now almost entirely planted with rice.

Outside of Honolulu, the planting of kalo is still in native hands, but in that city, the Chinese have entirely hustled the native to one side. Apart from a couple of establishments belonging to white firms they are the only retailers of poi. A law was passed several years ago by the Hawaiian Legislature forbidding the manufature of poi within the city limits of Honolulu. This was done in order to do away with the evils arising from the unsanitary state of the filthy Chinese dens where the poi is at present manufactured, and also on account of the evil smells arising from the kalo refuse which in some cases is allowed to accumulate around these poi shops. The law, however, was only to come in force whenever the government should provide a central market or depot for the manufacture of poi, situated somewhere in the outskirts of Honolulu. This has never been done and so the Chinaman is still at liberty to continue in his old evil ways.

In different years and in various parts of the islands, the kalo plant has been liable to the ravages of a disease which attacks the tuber. The blight is said to be caused by a kind of worm. The kalo growing on Kauai seems to be very badly affected at the present time, as large quantities of poi is sent every week by steamer to that island to supply the wants of the inhabitants. Would not the study of this kalo blight be a good subject of inquiry on the part of the newly appointed Board of Forestry and Agriculture.

Some years ago a company at Wailuku, Maui, called the Alden Fruit and Taro Co., took up the manufacture of poi by machinery. It struggled on for a few years until it had to succumb. The company has recently been resuscitated under the name of the Hawaiian Fruit and Taro Company. This company, in addition to manufacturing or pounding poi by machine, instead of by the old fashioned hand pounding process, manufactures a preparation called taro flour. It is put up in suitable bags, keeps well, and judging from the testimonials received from members of the medical faculty and from private individuals, it should prove a valuable article of diet in the sick room and for the use of dyspeptics. The same company sells an article styled "*Taro maloo*," or Hawaiian maccaroni, which may be cooked in a number of ways. In the vicinity of Honolulu, Mr. L. Wilcox has a factory where the kalo is prepared into poi by machinery.

An attempt to manufacture the kalo into a species of flour was made by the English missionaries in Tahiti so far back as 1803. Ellis in his Polynesian Researches, says "when destitute of foreign supplies, we have attempted to make flour with both the breadfruit and the taro, by employing the natives to scrape the root and fruit into a kind of pulpy paste, then drying it in the sun, and grinding it in a hand-mill. The taro in this state was sometimes rather improved."

One writer in explaining the ease with which the natives are able to sustain themselves, states that the kalo grown on a square mile of land is sufficient to feed 15,151 persons during a whole year. Another writer of more recent date places the figure rather lower. He estimates that a square mile of kalo will afford enough food to sustain 12,274 persons for a year. Taking the latter figure as nearest the mark it shows how easily the native may sustain himself and family if he will only take the trouble to cultivate a small patch of kalo for his own use.

PAKAHA.

HAPPY PITCAIRNERS.

They Neither Smoke Nor Drink and Enjoy Life.

Pitcairn island, where the descendants of the mutineers of the Bounty live in seclusion and primitive contentment boasts of being absolutely free from the vice of drinking. The prohibition laws there touch not only liquors, but tobacco. A shipwrecked sailor named Coffin, who was cast ashore there a few months ago, had managed to save his dearly cherished pipe and pouch of tobacco. The chief magistrate of the colony promptly informed him that he must give up smoking if he wanted to enjoy their hospitality, and when he refused he was so effectually boycotted that he fled this ocean paradise by the first passing ship. Captain Bailey of the American merchantman Vigilant, from Japan, brings this story. He stopped at the island and traded trinkets for food with the natives, and found them happy and prosperous, though not a drop of rain had fallen there for two years, and the volcano over which their island lies had been giving ominous indications of activity.—[Detroit Free Press.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for the statements made or opinions expressed by our correspondents.

MR. EDITOR: As an American citizen residing temporarily in Honolulu since New Years, an interested spectator of the late peaceful revolution, I desire to present a few thoughts on the present political situation from an American standpoint.

When the Hawaiian Parliament passed the Opium and Lottery bills and the Queen tried to abrogate the Constitution she had sworn to support, and substitute one which gave her absolute autocratic powers, the monarchy sunk by its own weight of rottenness and want of fidelity to the people, never to rise again.

The civilization of the nineteenth century could not abide such iniquities, and the revolution came, as truthfully detailed in "Two Weeks of Hawaiian History." It was fortunate that the U. S. S. Boston was in port, and that the United States Minister and its Captain acted so promptly to protect life and property, else much violence might have resulted; but the end would have been the same, for the Anglo-Saxon blood was up.

The Hawaiian Provisional Government having made a Treaty of Annexation with the United States, the question is, shall it be ratified as it stands, or shall it be modified, or shall we refuse to do either and establish a Protectorate as against all foreign governments, and leave these cosmopolitan people to fight out their own battles in domestic affairs.

Fifty years ago Lord George Paulet came here in his ship, pulled down the Hawaiian flag, and hoisted that of Great Britain; five months later Admiral Thomas came and restored the monarchy. When this was done, the United States did not have undisputed control of one inch of Pacific Coast; now she owns all between San Diego and Behrings' Straits, except British Columbia. Since that time twenty millions of free people have made homes west of the Mississippi river, and built large cities on the Pacific coast which stand face to face with eight hundred million Asiatics, with whom we must have trade and intercourse. They are intensely conservative, we are intensely progressive; what problems are in store for us to solve in connection with them no one can tell. Men pass away, but nations are long lived; China has existed four thousand years, and has four hundred million people. What a power she will be when Western civilization breaks through its encrusted shell?

England, Germany, France and Spain control the islands of the South Pacific; with them we have nothing to do except through an unfortunate agreement with Great Britain and Germany about Samoa, in regard to a joint protectorate.

The Hawaiian Islands are the key to the North Pacific ocean. Americans have large and important interests here, which we are bound to protect. The United States to-day is the strongest government on earth: we have sixty-five million people. In fifteen years, by past ratios, we will have one hundred million; in forty years, two hundred million!! Our strength lies in free institutions, which form a peaceful, progressive nation; but we look ahead with a view to avoid war, hence we have inaugurated the policy of arbitration; and it is in the interest of peace that the two nations of America and Hawaii should become one. A protectorate involves great responsibilities on the part of the United States with no compensating advantages, while it means internal broils and dissensions for ninety thousand people of many nationalities and races. By a law of common interest and obvious destiny these Hawaiian Islands must become a part of the United States and the people American citizens, a name of which any man may be proud.

These Islands must ally themselves with some first-class power that can give them absolute protection, and the sooner the better, for there is much distress in the land. They are the choice spots in all the world for climatic sanitariums; free from frosts; free from indigenous malaria; with braeing trade winds nine months in the year; with good sea bathing the year round, yet with perpetual snow on her highest elevation, affording every variety of climate; two thousand miles from a continent; at the crossroads of the great ocean highways, these mountains in the sea stand forth monuments of the Infinite love of the Infinite Father, beckoning America to bring good stable government to a cosmopolitan people who have suffered much from a maladministration of their affairs, and who were threatened with moral ruin.

There are many problems of a local character to solve, but time will cure all. Brave men, of a stock who never flinch, have opened the way; wisdom and experience will do the rest. When annexed, the Crown Lands ought to be subdivided into homesteads (kuleanas), and the *first option* of location for two years should be given to those Hawaiians who are not now owners of land; and in order to secure it to their families as a home, it should be *inalienable* for thirty years.

Forecasting destinies fifty or a hundred years, does any statesman suppose that these Islands will remain as in the past? If America declines to accept of the offer now made, it might result in an Asiatic occupation or a war to prevent it. This would not mean a step forward for Christian civilization, but an obstacle to such advancement, and a menace to American interests. The planting of the American flag in the midst of the Pacific ocean will be a most powerful factor in the interests of peace; and, if war should ever come, batteries of heavy guns on Punchbowl and Diamond Head, defending the only good harbor that exists here, would make any enemy give it a wide berth.

The natives of Hawaii are a kindly, gentle and generous race—hospitable to the last degree, full of good points; the world moves for them as well as for others. Grass houses, idol worship and the monarchy are things of the past; under the new regime they will have the same territorial Hawaiian flag, supplemented by the flag of the Union; under its protecting folds they will fear no evil, and a reign of prosperity and happiness will be inaugurated. So mote it be.

Aloha,

AN AMERICAN.